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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GH](#)
SUBJECT: TWO CONVICTED FOR ROLE IN 2005 COCAINE SCANDAL

REF: A) 2006 ACCRA 1793 B) 2006 ACCRA 2386 C) ACCRA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PAMELA E. BRIDGEWATER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (U) After a year long trial, an Accra court on November 28 sentenced both Kwabena Amaning, aka Tagor, and Alhaji Isaah Abass to 15 years hard labor in connection with the 2005 cocaine scandal involving the MV Benjamin. As reported in ref A, the 2005 cocaine scandal kicked off when five kilograms of cocaine went missing from the Narcotics Control Board evidence room. Investigations later determined that 77 parcels of cocaine were brought into Ghana on the MV Benjamin and the GOG, despite being given intelligence about the cocaine shipment beforehand, was unable to seize the ship until after 76 parcels were off loaded and disappeared. After law enforcement personnel boarded the MV Benjamin, only one parcel of cocaine remained on board. The ship then mysteriously caught fire a few days later while in the Tema port. As a result of the public outcry, the GOG launched a Commission of Inquiry led by Chief Justice Georgina Wood to investigate the scandal and make recommendations (ref B). The Commission recommended, among other things, the arrest of 13 individuals including Tagor, Abass, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Kofi Boakye, five police officers and three members of the ship's crew. Trials for the five police officers and the crew are ongoing.

¶2. (U) The charges against Abass and Tagor stemmed from a conversation at ACP Boakye's house, recorded by Tagor, in which Abass, Tagor, ACP Boakye, and others held a meeting to discuss why they were not aware of this cocaine shipment. The tape, when released, initiated a storm of controversy and implicated Abass, Tagor, Boakye and two others in the missing cocaine scandal. Everyone heard on the tape was charged, except for ACP Boakye, who is now attending law school. The trial judge in the present case said during sentencing that Boakye had "self confessed" to his role in the crime on the tape and expressed his displeasure at Attorney General Joe Ghartey's decision not to prosecute him. The judge went on to say that it is "not too late to prosecute Kofi Boakye" for narcotics offenses.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: This case shocked Ghana when it broke and highlighted the increasing flow of narcotics transiting Ghana. It appeared to awaken the GOG to the drug problem, which dutifully created a commission to investigate and make recommendations. However, as septel will report, the vast majority of the recommendations were never implemented. The press covered the scandals and trials consistently and reported nearly every development in the long trial. The convictions of Tagor and Abass are welcome and came just days after two Venezuelans were convicted for their role in the East Legon cocaine case (ref C), another case the media covered extensively. The GOG has taken some positive steps lately in the battle against narcotics; however the failure to prosecute ACP Kofi Boakye is glaring, given incriminating statements he made during the recorded conversation which

implicate him in cocaine trafficking. It is unclear why Boakye was not charged, but some contacts have suggested that Boakye may have some incriminating information on other individuals, causing the Attorney General to not prosecute him. Until the GOG has the stomach to fully prosecute and investigate allegations against all officials and individuals involved in the drug trade, it will be unable to mount a serious offensive against the drug barons. END COMMENT.
BRIDGEWATER